

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

hungry for His honour and for the salvation of your neighbour, to find a remedy for all this. I am certain that, if you are bound in the sweet bond of charity, you will use your legation, which you have received from the Vicar of Christ, in this way. But, without the first bond of charity, you cannot use it so, nor do what you ought; and, therefore, I pray you to try to have this love in you. Bind yourself with Christ crucified, following His footsteps with true and royal virtues, and bind yourself with your neighbour by deeds of love. But I would have us think, dearest father, that, unless our soul is stripped of all self-love and worldly affection, we can never come to this true and perfect love, the bond of charity; because one love is so contrary to the other, that the one separates us from God and our neighbour, while the other unites us ; one gives life, and the other death ; one gives darkness, and the other light; one war, and the other peace. Self-love so narrows the heart that it leaves no room for you or your neighbour ; but divine charity enlarges it, receiving into itself friends and enemies and every rational creature, because it is clothed with the love of Christ and therefore follows Him¹. Miserable self-love abandons justice and commits injustice, and has a servile fear which does not let it do justly what it should, either because of flatteries or for fear of losing its state. This is that perverse servitude and fear that led Pilate to slay Christ. I would have you, then, utterly lay aside this kind of love, and be founded in true and perfect charity, loving God for His own sake, inasmuch as He is worthy of being loved, because He is the supreme and eternal Goodness, and loving yourself for Him and your neighbour for Him, and not for your own advantage. Thus, then, my father, legate of our lord the Pope, would I have you bound in the bond of true and most ardent charity, and this does my soul desire to see in you."¹

¹ Letter 7 (23). The Palatine MS. 56 states that this letter was sent to the Cardinal " in Corneto, essendo nuovamente fatto ine legato." Students of the *Inferno* may remember that it was this legate, "vir magnae virtutis et scientiae," who, at the instigation of Benvenuto da Imok, made the stern, but ineffectual attempt to stamp out unnatural vice in the University of Bologna. Cf. Benvenuto, *Comentum*, I. pp. 523, 524, where for 1375 we should probably read 1373.